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S/S 1705
Mr. Bruce

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: November 19, 1952

SUBJECT: Yugoslav Affairs

PARTICIPANTS:
Mr. Vladimir Popovic, Yugoslav Ambassador,
Dr. Mirko Bruner, First Secretary, Yugoslav Embassy,

Mr. David Bruce, Acting Secretary of State
Mr. Walworth Barbour, Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs.

COPIES TO:
S/S (2)
EUR - Mr. Perkins
Mr. Bonbright
UNA
EE - Mr. Leverich
Mr. Marcy
American Embassy, Belgrade.

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Ambassador Popovic called on November 19, by appointment made at his request. He first summarized his impressions of the Yugoslav situation in general as ascertained during his recent visit there. Briefly, he stated that despite the various problems still confronting Yugoslavia, he had noted a considerable improvement since his previous visit a year ago in the country's unity and determination to resist the external threat facing it and to ameliorate economic and political conditions internally. This improvement he attributed to numerous political and economic measures which have been taken during the past year with a view primarily to removing obstacles to development in both fields which had arisen as a result of Yugoslavia's previous close adherence to the Soviet system and to increased production. He noted Mr. Eden's visit to Yugoslavia and the fact that Tito will pay a return visit to England. He particularly mentioned the military talks which the Yugoslavs have been conducting with the Greeks and Turks and stated that he hoped these developments were agreeable to the US. He added that there was, of course, some speculation in Yugoslavia, as elsewhere, as to whether the advent of a new administration in the US would adversely affect US-Yugoslav relations.

I said that we do look with favor on the developing relationships between Yugoslavia and Greece and Turkey and expressed doubt that the nature of US and Yugoslav relations is such as to be appreciably affected under a new administration in this country.

Ambassador

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Ambassador Popovic then mentioned the drought in Yugoslavia, noting that it constituted the second in the last three years and, in emphasizing the seriousness of the situation thereby created, urged the need for US assistance. He asked specifically when a decision in that connection might be forthcoming and hoped that such a decision would be expedited. I replied that we were aware of the seriousness of this matter and were giving it earnest consideration both here and in consultation with his government in Belgrade and that, while I could not give him any indication of the nature of our probable conclusions or our ability to assist further at this time, I could assure him that those decisions will be taken just as soon as possible.

Ambassador Popovic remarked that in the Yugoslav view, recent indications of increased reasonableness in the Soviet attitude toward the Western world which seemed to be appearing in various quarters did not indicate any real change in the Soviet attitude and was merely for the purpose of lulling the West into quiescence. He felt that the time might come when talks with the Soviets might be fruitful in solving existing issues but that that time is not now.

I said that his analysis conformed largely to our view and that we see no evidence at present that the Soviets are prepared to take concrete action to solve existing problems.

The Ambassador then referred to Korea, inquiring whether, in the present circumstances, we thought a settlement to be possible, and seemed to imply that a postponement of consideration might be advisable or necessary. (The Ambassador's exposition did not make it clear whether his reference to the settlement related only to an armistice or whether he was thinking in more general terms).

I replied that the only issue apparently involved in the armistice situation at this time is that of the prisoners of war and that this Government is firmly determined on the principle of no forcible repatriation. I added that there seemed to be little point in my going into detail on this matter, particularly in as much as things are moving rapidly in New York and the situation is changing all the time. I noted that the Indians had tabled a resolution which is somewhat confused and remarked that the Secretary is talking to a number of other delegations in connection with this problem today. I stated that we definitely do not want any postponement of consideration of this matter.

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In conclusion, we discussed briefly the health of Mr. Kidric and Yugoslav efforts to obtain medical assistance for him, noting that two British doctors had already arrived in Belgrade and that the Embassy, with the Department's assistance, is in touch with Georgetown Hospital with a view to arrangements being made for additional American help.

David Bruce

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